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## TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES

*By Philip Brown, Late American Minister to Honduras and  
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Turkey undoubtedly suggests to the ordinary observer little more than pillage and massacre. "The Unspeakable Turk" epitomizes for many the character attributed to the Turkish race for centuries. The only adequate solution of the "Eastern Question" has frequently been asserted to lie in the expulsion of the Turk from the Bosphorus.

It would be useless to attempt to minimize or gloss over the cruelties which have been practised for centuries on the Christian subjects of the Turkish Empire. It would however, be grossly unjust as well as historically inaccurate to place the blame on the whole Turkish race. Generalizations of such a nature applied to other peoples than the Turks would in many instances be quite as unjust. The hanging of witches, the lynching of negroes, the murder of innocent Italian and Chinese laborers in our own land can no more be laid to the whole American people than the pillaging of helpless peasants by the Kurds, the massacre of thousands of Armenians by order of a red-handed sultan, be imputed to the alleged sanguinary instincts of the Turkish race.

An entire people cannot justly be branded with responsibility for the crimes committed by an irresponsible autocrat whose every action was inspired by an insane fear of assassination. The terrible reign of Abdul Hamid has probably been in large measure responsible for the present general prejudice against the Turk. We are led to forget that, according to their lights, some of the preceding sultans were men of liberal tendencies and that their subjects enjoyed a degree of tolerance and privileges denied certain other peoples of Europe.

If we are to judge fairly of the Turk, we must not lose sight of his awful inheritance: the lamentable conditions prevailing under the ancient Eastern Empire: the wars of conquest that devastated that part of the world for centuries: the extortions of the tax gatherer: the bitter, religious strifes that invariably ended in the shedding of innocent blood. These are gloomy facts of history and it should not seem so extraordinary a phenomenon that the rule of the Turk over different Christian races, hating each other with as intense a hatred as Moslem and Christian ever felt, should have been relentlessly severe and at times attended by the shedding of blood.

We cannot of course ignore the spectre of religious fanaticism whether of Moslem towards Christian or of one Christian sect towards another. We should, however, try fairly to conceive the colossal task which would have confronted any other nation than the Turks that might have been entrusted by destiny with the responsibility of ruling over the hostile and apparently incompatible elements composing the Turkish Empire.

Consider the conditions in European Turkey. Who can reconcile the racial prejudices and conflicting ambitions of the Greek, Bulgar and Turk? Who could be rash enough to offer with confidence an adequate solution of the "Macedonian Question"? Who would venture to solve that extraordinary problem presented in Albania?

Consider the Asiatic provinces of Turkey: the demoralized remnants of the defunct Armenian nation: the marauding, untamed, Kurdish tribes: the Druzes in the Hauran, recently in arms against the government: the factional disturbances never ceasing in Arabia which has yet to be entirely subdued to the rule of the Turk.

What fair-minded man can withhold from the Turk in the face of these baffling complications, a generous sympathy or fail to recognize the almost insuperable obstacles which would confront any other nation that might undertake the burden of governing the Turkish Empire?

An important consideration to be borne in mind in judging the Turk is the fact that it was not the Christian Rayah

alone who suffered under the bloody reign of Abdul Hamid. Many a Moslem was subjected to untold cruelties. Many Turkish homes were bereaved and life made intolerable for those who on the flimsiest grounds incurred the suspicions and illwill of the sultan and his army of murderers. Many of the youths of the best Turkish families were tortured and sent to a dreadful exile from whence few ever returned. On the establishment of the constitution a general pardon was granted all who had been imprisoned and exiled on political grounds but for very many this pardon arrived too late.

That reign of terror is very vivid in the minds of many foreigners who, unable to afford much help or protection, suffered in sympathy with the Moslem as well as with the Christian victims of Abdul Hamid. And yet what notice did the humanitarians of Europe and America take of the Turkish sufferer? *His* grievances were ignored and the sympathy of such well-meaning organizations as the Balkan Committee in England was reserved for the warring Christian factions in Macedonia who, perhaps, were reaping as much the harvest of their own mutual hatreds as they were suffering from the misrule of Abdul Hamid. This popular agitation in Europe over the demoralized state of affairs in Macedonia undoubtedly hastened the revolution of July 1908, whose object was primarily to avert the dismemberment of the empire immediately threatened by the projected Macedonian reforms. But it should never be forgotten that the ultimate purpose of the revolution was the establishment of a constitutional régime that should ensure the blessings of liberty to the *Turk* as well as to the Christian.

All these considerations should be borne in mind in judging of the Turk in general and in forming an unbiased estimate of the new régime in Turkey. We should never lose sight of the accumulated ills of centuries inherited by the Young Turk and the peculiarly complicated problems he has to solve.

While to many observers the progress being made under the new régime appears to be of an exaggerated 'festina lente' variety, there are not lacking appreciative critics who believe

that the Young Turks are doing better than could have been expected. It is as much a wise precept as it is a notorious fact that "you cannot hustle the East."

Since the bloodless revolution of 1908, there have been several junctures when in the face of treason at home and dangerous complications abroad, it seemed as if the achievements of the Young Turks would be swept away and a worse state of affairs ensue than was ever known before. With admirable tact and statesmanship, with firmness and tolerance, they rose splendidly to the emergency and earned the increasing admiration of the outside world. Kiamil Pasha, Ex-Grand Vizier, Said Pasha, Ex-Grand Vizier and now President of the Senate, Hussein Pasha, Ex-Grand Vizier and formerly Inspector General of the Macedonian Vilayets, Rifaat Pasha, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mahmoud Shevket Pasha, Minister of War and General in charge of the army that re-occupied Constantinople in April, 1909, Ahmed Riza Bey, President of the House of Deputies, Halil Bey, leader of the party of Union and Progress in parliament, Hakki Pasha, now Grand Vizier, once Turkish commissioner to the Chicago Exposition, Talaat Bey, Minister of the Interior, Djavid Bey, Minister of Finance and many others associated with them in directing the affairs of the Empire, compel a revised estimate of the Turk as known under and previous to the régime of Abdul Hamid.

The European powers have been compelled to recognize that a new factor of unknown force and tendency has arisen in the Near East, a factor that exacts respect, that requires a sweeping readjustment of their diplomatic relations with Turkey and a new orientation of their policies in that part of the world. Austria, under the exigencies of an abnormal *status quo* in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was the first to appreciate this fact. Under the old régime, each nation felt constrained to be its own judge as to the effective protection of its interests in Turkey, employing at times methods in flagrant derogation of the rights of Turkish sovereignty. But the European powers have openly or tacitly been forced to acknowledge that it is now necessary to reckon with a constitutional government prepared to afford proper protection

to foreign interests and to resent vigorously any further lesions of Ottoman rights.

It is not to be expected—nor do any of the enlightened Turkish statesmen so pretend, that a complete abolition of extra-territorial privileges now enjoyed by foreigners may be warranted in the immediate future. With increasingly effective guarantees to life and property under a constitutional government, it is, however, to be expected that one by one these privileges will cease to exist, either by reason of disuse or the positive acquiescence of the powers. As an example, it is confidently to be assumed that with an honest efficient administration of the Ottoman Postal service, the foreign postoffices now maintained at certain points in Turkey will be withdrawn in the not distant future. Count Ostrorog, legal adviser of the Turkish Ministry of Justice is quoted to have stated in this connection that:

According to the admissions even of the most impartial and most eminent, legal authorities, it is plain that the wide application of the Capitulations<sup>1</sup> has given rise to uncertainty, to useless differences and sometimes to acts absolutely contrary to law and equity. It is desirable for both parties to the Capitulations, in order to establish wise and sincere relations, to put an end to this situation. It is necessary to revise the provisions of the Capitulations: to remove the causes of controversy as well as all which is of a character to wound the national *amour-propre* and cause friction in the relations between Ottomans and foreigners: in sum to find a temporary *modus vivendi* based on friendship, law and justice. This is what the Imperial Government asks. (*Translation from French.*)

While for obvious reasons it is not an easy matter for the European powers to adjust themselves to the new order of things in the Near East, no such difficulty exists for the United States which, having no political ends to serve, has aimed solely to ensure an adequate protection of American interests in Turkey without injury to Turkish pride or sovereign rights. What is required of the United States is a clear perception of the new conditions created by the exist-

<sup>1</sup>Capitulations were those sections of early treaties between Turkey and other powers, on which the extra-territorial privileges of foreigners are based.

ence of a responsible constitutional government in Turkey and a full realization of America's commercial opportunities as well as of her obligation to manifest sympathy, so far as may be feasible, to those Turkish patriots now engaged in the Herculean task of adapting democratic institutions to adverse conditions.

Formal diplomatic relations between the United States and Turkey date from the negotiations for the Treaty of 1830. Prior to that time the protection of American interests was in the hands of the English Levant Commercial Company which charged generously for its professional services as a diplomatic agent.

The questions which have arisen between Turkey and the United States have rarely been of a commercial character but have been largely confined to the rights of American missionaries and philanthropists to carry on their beneficent work as freely and unhindered as the representatives of other nations, engaged in similar work. Under the baneful rule of Abdul Hamid, the American government was constantly obliged to use strenuous representations to obtain punishment of those responsible for the failure to protect American persons and property, to secure in some instances the payment of indemnity for such failure, the punishment of murderers of Americans, the right to travel freely and other rights guaranteed by the law of nations and by treaty. The famous abduction of Miss Stone was one of the instances which called attention to the conditions prevailing under the rule of Abdul Hamid, though it is by no means clearly established that the Turkish government could be held directly responsible for this unfortunate incident.

A constant subject for discussion between the Porte and the American government was the question of the recognition of American missionary and educational institutions on exactly the same basis as other foreign institutions of a like nature. Cases involving this right frequently arose, such as for example the momentous question as to whether an American missionary might base the right to import a brass bedstead for home use on privileges accorded French monks



under the Capitulations to introduce, free of duty, articles necessary for the monastery. This matter of the recognition of American institutions, after years of fruitless negotiation and discussion, was only settled in principle in August 1904, through the able representations of Ambassador Leishman, effectively supported by President Roosevelt and Mr. Hay, Secretary of State. Exact statistics are not at hand but the number of institutions affected by this arrangement is more than three hundred and the money invested in them may be counted by millions.

Another abstract question which has given rise to interminable discussion and disagreement has been over Article IV of the Treaty of 1830, whereby the United States has claimed the right to try and punish American citizens, criminally accused, a right which is claimed by no other nation except Belgium. This controversy owes its origin to a divergence in the interpretation of the Turkish text of the Treaty, which was accepted as the only authoritative text in case of dispute, and owes its continuance mainly to those insupportable conditions existing under Abdul Hamid, that rendered it impossible to submit American citizens to the exclusive jurisdiction of Ottoman courts. The American government has ever shown a conciliatory disposition in its negotiations with the Turkish Government over this moot point of the interpretation of Article IV and, as this is mainly a question of interpretation, there should be no serious obstacle in the way of a satisfactory solution of the difficulty, given the same conciliatory disposition on the part of the Turkish government as well as its ability to accord justice to foreigners. An adjustment of this difference in a manner pleasing to Turkish *amour propre* would be a happy event which should prove of mutual advantage to both Governments.

Another troublesome question long at issue between the United States and Turkey, has been the refusal of the latter to recognize the right of its subjects to change their nationality without the previous consent of the Ottoman government. The naturalization of so many Armenians in the United States and their return to their native land either



for a brief or prolonged sojourn, gave rise to many complicated diplomatic questions during the reign of Abdul Hamid, whose hatred and cruelty towards the Armenians was notorious. In the absence of a treaty of naturalization with Turkey, each of these instances of the deportation or arrest of American citizens of Ottoman origin had to be judged on its own merits and, as a rule, either by reason of American law and policy or the constraint of humanitarian considerations, the American Government was compelled to protect its naturalized citizens from the injustice and cruelty of Abdul Hamid. Since the establishment of the new constitutional régime, however, although very many naturalized Americans of Ottoman origin have returned to their native land, little has been heard of this troublesome question. With improved conditions of life in Turkey, not only should this cease to be a matter of controversy but it should not be difficult to negotiate with The Porte a naturalization treaty similar to those made with other nations.

In regard to the standing of American institutions in Turkey, it may be summarized by the statement that they were cursed under the old régime and are praised under the new. They were cursed under the old régime because they were so many beacons of hope in a pitiful darkness, a darkness that best served the evil designs of Abdul Hamid. Except by the extreme fanatics and Chauvinists, they are praised under the new régime because the enlightened Turkish leaders are anxious to spread the light of higher morals and those principles of self-government which the American educator and missionary so effectively inculcate.

Those who have been privileged to come into intimate contact with the remarkable men and women whom America has been sending out to minister philanthropically in Turkey, unite in testifying to their culture, their high intellectual standards, their forceful personalities and their devotion to the ideal and to duty. While other nations have largely been absorbed in forwarding political and commercial ends in Turkey, America, whose people are so tritely accused of being commercial in their instincts, has been giving that country its best manhood and womanhood

without contemplation of other gain than the consciousness of having done its part towards other needy members of the great human family.

If the need for American schools, missions and hospitals in Turkey has been great in the past, there would seem to exist an unequalled opportunity for their services at the present time. These institutions have never professed to proselytize among Moslems nor do the latter apprehend such a propaganda. Their practical results have been largely the raising of the general standard of morality among peoples already Christian. It may fairly be asserted that what was originally a missionary crusade has now become to all intents and purposes an educational undertaking. As such it has a wonderful opportunity under the new constitutional régime to aid most effectively in the stupendous task of enlightening peoples long in darkness and of fitting them for the heavy responsibilities of self-government.

But there is another practical aspect of this matter. It should be evident that the presence of so large a number of Americans in Turkey engaged almost unconsciously in the spreading of American ideals and ideas, cannot fail to prove of definite, commercial value to the United States. An interest in *things* American is undoubtedly created and a desire to possess the implements, machinery and general mechanical contrivances which have been so essential to the marvelous development of the United States.

It is a lamentable fact that American exports to Turkey have failed to achieve the proportions to have been expected. The balance of trade is disproportionately in Turkey's favor as may be seen by the following table of statistics:

IMPORTS FROM	TWELVE MONTHS ENDING JUNE			
	1908	1909	1910	Totals
Turkey in Europe.....	\$ 4,554,509	\$ 6,393,468	\$ 8,689,769	\$ 19,637,746
Turkey in Asia.....	6,205,061	6,035,660	8,514,132	20,754,853
Turkey in Africa (Tripoli).....	1,614	6,650	96,662	104,926
	\$10,761,184	\$12,435,778	\$17,300,563	\$40,497,525
EXPORTS TO				
	1908	1909	1910	Totals
Turkey in Europe.....	\$ 1,418,024	\$ 1,896,249	\$ 1,613,168	\$ 4,927,441
Turkey in Asia.....	555,376	621,893	744,504	1,921,773
Turkey in Africa (Tripoli).....	3,010		14,232	17,242
	\$ 1,976,410	\$ 2,518,142	\$ 2,371,904	\$ 6,866,456

Balance of trade in favor of Turkey for period 1908-1910: \$33,631,069.

The establishment of the constitutional régime in Turkey, with its increased guarantees of protection to life and property, has made it possible to open up to trade enormous districts heretofore almost completely closed: has made available for cultivation large tracts of land such as the once famous region of Mesopotamia; has brought to light mineral properties of inestimable value; has consequently made urgently necessary the construction of thousands of miles of railroad, the introduction of electric roads, the development of electric power; in sum has disclosed a tremendous market for trade and a splendid field for investment.

Heretofore, the Turkish government, in its extremely difficult task of avoiding offence to the susceptibilities of the several European powers having conflicting ambitions in the Near East, and also in its necessity of obtaining at crucial moments the diplomatic support of one or more of these powers, has been compelled to award valuable concessions, place loans, give immense contracts for armaments and the construction of ships and other big commercial privileges at terms often very far from advantageous. In fact, while the Turkish government, in principle, may resolve to favor only the lowest bidder in all these transactions, in

actual practice for a long time to come, in all probability, it will be influenced considerably by political considerations, until the day arrive when Turkey may be strong enough to exact respect for an entire independence among the nations, which it has not yet been able to enjoy.

From the foregoing observations it would seem evident that Turkey has great need of capital to aid in its regeneration and development and that it should seek this capital where it may be obtained most advantageously, without political compromise or any obligations whatsoever other than those entailed in any ordinary financial transaction. It would also seem evident that no nation is in a better position to assist Turkey in its future commercial development than the United States which has no political ends to serve and may well pride itself on the part hitherto played by America in the Near East.

The opportunity for the United States to participate in the development of the Turkish Empire would seem to need no demonstration. Yet it is by no means clear that the American public fully realizes this opportunity or has that general, keen interest it should have in the efforts being made with the support of the American Government and its representatives, to forward successfully American interests in the Near East. One powerful reason why Germany is so successful in her commercial expansion is the fact that every German takes a live personal interest in the extension of trade and all pull together for that end, with especially good success in Turkey. A great game for big stakes is going on in that country. American financiers and manufacturers are striving against great odds to win. The American public should not remain indifferent to this game and should be fully alive to the important transformation going on in the Ottoman Empire.

While the United States wisely has no intention of becoming involved in any political controversies in the Near East, we must not forget that having attained a man's estate among the nations, America cannot, even if it would, fail to play its part as a great world power and refuse to share in the commercial as well as the moral and intellec-

tual welfare of the other nations of the world. The United States cannot afford to remain indifferent to the great changes now taking place in the Levant nor can it ignore the fact that under modern conditions commercial advantages cannot be won without the active support of the American government or the employment of the great prestige America so justly enjoys and is bound to maintain. While it may be held in theory that governments should not intervene in the operations of trade, it would seem folly for the United States to fail to stand by its citizens when other nations such as England are aiding by means of subsidies to protect its merchant marine and Germany is wholeheartedly helping German merchants and manufacturers to win a great commercial ascendancy even in this Western hemisphere. It is futile to idly lament this undoubted tendency. Our duty would seem to be to loyally reinforce the efforts of the government to effectively support all legitimate measures for the extension of American commerce and the forwarding of American interests throughout the world.

It would be presumptuous to attempt to indicate the various diplomatic means which may very properly be employed in this great undertaking. There is every reason to believe that President Taft and Secretary of State Knox, who has created a most efficient Division of Near Eastern Affairs in the State Department, both fully appreciate America's great opportunity and are prepared to do all in their power to advance American interests in Turkey. What must be re-emphasized is the necessity of awakening public interest in the tremendous commercial game now being played in that part of the world in order to appreciate intelligently the policy being pursued by the government at Washington in this regard and to give to that policy the enthusiastic support of the whole American people.

We should moreover, remember the obligation resting on us to sympathize generously with any people who may be struggling to secure the privileges of democratic institutions, whether in Latin America, China or the Near East. The Young Turks deserve and need the heartiest encourage-

ment in their gigantic task of adapting democratic principles to Oriental conditions and the day may come when the voice of the American people, without fear of political entanglements, will be of no little influence in pleading for Turkey the right to achieve, unhindered by foreign intrigue, that place among the nations which the God of nations may have destined it to possess.

It cannot be denied that there are many who do not wish to see the rule of the Turks perpetuated; those who still feel towards the Moslem something of the spirit of the old Crusaders; who have ineradicable prejudices that preclude fair judgment, who honestly doubt the capacity of the Turk for administration, his ability to assimilate principles of self-government; who question the adaptability of the Faith of Islam to modern progress. It should not be difficult, however, in our consideration of the relations which should exist between the United States and Turkey, to agree that there is every good reason to be proud of the work of American institutions in Turkey; that these institutions have still a mission to fulfill; that the new constitutional régime has opened up magnificent commercial opportunities; that the United States is in a peculiarly favored position to take advantage of these opportunities and finally that we ought not to rest indifferent to the efforts of the Young Turks, who, against disheartening odds, are striving to throw light into darkness and give to those long oppressed and without hope the priceless treasure of self-government.